

GORBACHEV BACKED

A Western-Style System of Government Urged as Meeting Ends

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MOSCOW, Feb. 7 — The Communist Party leadership agreed today to surrender its historic monopoly of power in the Soviet Union and accept a program that recommends the creation of a Western-style presidency and Cabinet system of government.

The Soviet party's governing Central Committee ended a contentious three-day meeting with a strong endorsement of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's latest prescription for dealing with the badly ailing party and nation, including unspecified additional executive powers for the President.

Society Itself Will Decide

Central Committee leaders, summarizing what they conceded was a storm of questions, doubts and complaints, said the hierarchy had finally agreed to end more than seven decades of party dictatorship by accepting the possibility of political pluralism and by making "no claim for any particular role to be encoded in the Constitution" for the Communists.

"Society itself will decide whether it wishes to adopt our politics," said Aleksandr N. Yakovlev, the Politburo member and Gorbachev confidant who is a leading architect of the latest Kremlin proposals to deal with the unrest that has pushed world Communism into retreat and reform.

Central Committee members repeatedly stressed that they were only recommending, not dictating, changes for possible enactment by the national Parliament, thereby underlining their own shrinking role in the state's executive affairs.

No Action Against Lithuania

These proposals would thus continue Mr. Gorbachev's attempt to channel power from the party to the Government. They would, if enacted, enhance his role as President, but how fully competitive party or presidential rivals might arise, if ever, was in no way clear from the early proposal sketched after the meeting.

The 250-member committee also acceded to the view of the Gorbachev leadership that no immediate sanctions be attempted against the Lithuanian Communist Party, which has declared independence from the Soviet party in a pioneer attempt to force political pluralism onto the land.

Instead, the committee members opted for a conciliatory approach, urging the Lithuanian insurgents to reconsider their action in the face of "top to bottom" changes that are promised for

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Soviet Union

Soviet Leadership Agrees to Surrender the Communist Party Monopoly on Power

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the critical party congress, to be held this summer.

The meeting also appeared to hedge on a crucial economic issue and reject proposals from some of the more radical delegates for a clear repeal of the party's standing opposition to private property.

Mr. Gorbachev once again displayed whip-hand success with the badly demoralized and increasingly unpopular party, but the meeting ended today with no purge of Mr. Gorbachev's remaining critics from the hierarchy.

Amid the party's general anxiety, these hard-liners were warning that there was no guarantee of success in Mr. Gorbachev's rapid-fire attempts to ignite national renewal. But despite all the anger and contention at the meeting, Mr. Yakovlev portrayed the Central Committee's solid center majority as being firmly with Mr. Gorbachev.

Some speakers warned that chaos and anarchy awaited the nation should the party fight the peoples' wish for pluralism. "Either we prove able to lead a rapid but controlled process of transformation or it will become an uncontrolled deluge," Vadim A. Medvedev, the party's ideology chief, told the meeting.

"It was not just a series of friendly embraces," Mr. Yakovlev said of the meeting at which the party leaders conceded that they had best retreat from their guaranteed power monopoly, seized by the Bolsheviks seven decades ago and first encoded in the Constitution of 1936.

"It would be very strange if after 70 years of silence all of us would begin talking in a single voice," he said of the impassioned session.

While the meeting was a dramatic measure of the party hierarchy's search for a way to avoid the sort of public confrontation and rout that precipitated the fall of Eastern European Communism, its recommendations carried no immediate guarantee of enactment.

Party Congress Moved Up

The proposals will next go to the 5,000-member national party congress that Mr. Gorbachev, in stepping up his timetable, succeeded in moving to late June or early July, several months sooner than originally scheduled.

The party congress, whose members seem likely to be selected by way of additional innovations expected from the Gorbachev leadership, would pro-



As he left the Central Committee meeting, Algirdas Brazauskas, Lithuanian party leader, gestured to reporters outside the Kremlin.

vide the ultimate party view of the changes by its 19 million members.

Even so, the national Parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, presently would have the final governmental say over the proposal to end the Constitution's guarantee of supreme powers to the party, enshrined in Article 6, as well as to create a new presidential system.

Of the latter, Mr. Yakovlev was vague on details, talking of such a revised presidency's being approved "by the people," but not directly suggesting direct competitive elections. Mr. Gorbachev is commonly referred to as the President, although technically he is chairman of the Supreme Soviet and roughly comparable to a parliamentary prime minister.

In No Hurry for New Parties

Party leaders who hailed the meeting's change of position on power monopoly were in no obvious rush to predict how soon or in what form true op-

Opponents' power might grow with Gorbachev's.

position parties might ever emerge, again insisting that this, too, should be up to the Parliament to decide.

"The party should not be organizing an opposition for itself," Mr. Yakovlev said, smiling. "This should be a natural course."

But he indicated that the party was expecting a more competitive outlook, stressing, "We will struggle to remain the governing party, but by political means."

Parliament underwent its own qualified democratization through partial competitive elections last March. In its

two ensuing sessions, a minority of members have displayed a willingness to criticize and dissent, but here, too, Mr. Gorbachev has thus far shown his ability to command the agenda and basically get what he wants approved.

Like a White House Scene

Even before the meeting's formal endorsement of Mr. Gorbachev's wishes was announced, the mood surrounding the Kremlin session was rich with signals. Delegates, who in previous regimes were absolutely secretive about committee meetings, this time were willing to discuss each day's doings. They even began adapting to the clutch of news reporters and camera crews that began staking out the Kremlin's Spassky Gate, precisely as they do the West Wing driveway of the White House. Here, too, certain delegates could not resist this odd oasis of limelight gleaming through the wintry dullness in Red Square.

"If we have 20 parties, it will be O.K.," said Svyatoslav N. Fyodorov, Moscow's garrulous celebrity eye surgeon and man about the party, stepping up to the microphone.

"We all agreed the country needs a president who will be able to solve problems quickly," he said, only guessing at what might be the enlarged role of such a post. "His functions will be to handle such cases as earthquakes, armed clashes, matters of war and peace. There should be a man who will keep his finger on the button."

While delegates at the meeting were hailing the proposals as dramatic cures for some of the nation's ills, the dissident voices who have been fighting for the right to opposition politics stressed that enormous struggles would probably remain even should pluralistic changes be adopted in Parliament.

A crucial question is how easily the

party's vast, entrenched machine might ever yield its control over countless jobs in all major institutions in all communities of the land — a nationwide patronage machine by diktat, in effect, that is rooted seven decades deep in Soviet history.

No Effect From Allies, He Says

In accounting for the party's change of heart toward its power monopoly, Mr. Yakovlev contended that the turmoil that gripped the Soviet allies in Eastern Europe was not a major factor.

"It cannot be based on those events taking place in the countries of Eastern Europe," he said, adding that in accounting for democratization, "any process should ripen in each and every individual country."

Even as Mr. Gorbachev was attempting fresh emergency domestic repairs through the party meeting, an announcement was being made that Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany would arrive Saturday for a sudden Kremlin visit to deal with an international issue of rapidly growing concern here, the possible reunification of the two Germans.

The issue was the subject of some sharply worded cautions at the Central Committee meeting not to forget the millions who died in the war against Nazi Germany.

'A European Germany'

Mr. Yakovlev said the Gorbachev Government understood modern Germans' hopes for unity, but he added, "We are in favor of a European Germany, not a German Europe."

Left unsettled thus far in the early summary of the meeting's activities is how the 5,000 delegates to the party congress will be selected. Mr. Yakovlev said the plenum proposed a "large-scale election campaign from top to bottom," but he did not say whether delegates would be elected in competitive secret-ballot elections by party members, as younger, more liberal-minded Communists want.

Of the Lithuanian breakaway party, Vice President Anatoly I. Lukyanov said it had "yet another chance" to return to the fold, an unlikely event even with the step announced today of a cut-off of central party financing. The local Communist insurgents have begun raising funds independent of Moscow.

"We do not think any single party should pretend to have a monopoly," Mr. Yakovlev said of the meeting's willingness to retreat. "This party is ready to share its prerogatives."